

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 04124 151603Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 226

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4124

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, IN, US
SUBJECT: TRAINING OF INDIAN POLICE OFFICERS

REF: STATE 62377

1. THE DEPARTMENT IS CORRECT IN ITS CHARACTERIZATION OF TRAINING IN THE US OF INDIAN POLICE OFFICERS AS A POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE ASPECT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. WHILE WE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO OUR PASSING ON THE REQUESTED INFORMATION, WHICH SEEMS TO BE VIRTUALLY IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD DO NOTHING TO ENCOURAGE THE INDIANS FROM LOOKING IN OUR DIRECTION FOR THIS KIND OF TRAINING. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POLITICAL/ PUBLIC REALTIONS CONSEQUENCES HERE OF SUCH TRAINING. WHILE INDIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IS EXEMPLARY, POLICE METHODS IN DEALING WITH RIOTS HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN TOUGH AND OFTEN HAM-HANDED. AT A TIME WHEN SEVERAL OPPOSITION PARTIES, NOTABLY MRS. GANDHI'S, ARE INCREASINGLY TURNING TO AGITATIONAL APPROACHES NECESSITATING POLICE ACTION, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE UNWISE FOR US TO PUT OURSELVES IN A POSITION WHERE WE COULD BE CHARGED WITH "ASSISTING POLICE BRUTALITY", HOWEVER EXAGGERATED SUCH CHARGES WOULD BE. IN SHORT, WE QUESTION WHETHER THE RISKS ARE WORTH THE GAINS WHICH RESPONSIVENESS WOULD BRING US. IF THE INDIANS CAN BE GENTLY TURNED TO OTHERS, THAT IN OUR VIEW WOULD BE BEST.

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